
Editorial

Richard W. Wright

University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90095, USA
and
Athens University of Economics and Business, Athens, Greece
E-mail: rwright@imatec.com

Biographical notes: Richard Wright is Visiting Distinguished Scholar at the Anderson School, UCLA; and Adjunct Professor at the Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece. He was formerly the E. Claiborne Robins Distinguished University Chair at the University of Richmond, and Director of International Business Studies at McGill University, Canada. He is the author or editor of 12 books, including *Globalisation and Emerging Businesses: Strategies for the 21st Century* (1999), and *Globalisation and Entrepreneurship: Policy and Strategy Perspectives* (2003).

The global business environment is changing dramatically. Traditionally, competition in international markets was the realm of large companies, while national governments protected and partially insulated local economies and cultures. However, the removal of government-imposed barriers that segregated and protected domestic markets, and recent technological advances in manufacturing, transportation and telecommunications, have weakened the power of national governments. These trends are transforming business strategies, public policies, and the daily lives of people around the world.

It is to explore important phenomena such as these, and to better understand the myriad resulting issues concerning business, government, and societies, that the *International Journal of Business and Globalisation* has been born.

Among the most significant of the trends on which the new journal will focus is the changing relationship between businesses and local cultures. It is clear that the forces of globalisation and economic integration are shifting economic power and sovereignty from national to supra-national levels. We are simultaneously witnessing another important, albeit less obvious, diminution of the traditional powers of nations-states in the opposite direction: from nation-states to local or regional levels. This is especially true in the realm of political and cultural sovereignty. In the past, when international economic activity was moulded and constrained largely by the power of individual nation-states, local businesses and local cultures were largely insulated from the impact of multinational firms and distant cultures. Some research suggests that as the power of nation-states to insulate local economies and sub-cultures diminishes, the identity of traditional subcultures is being destroyed. However, other research suggests that some subcultures are becoming even more distinctive and assertive than before; indeed those sub-cultural identities and affiliations may even strengthen their ability to survive and compete in the global economy.

This inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Business and Globalisation* focuses largely on subcultures, drawing insights from research in a variety of local settings. In the opening paper, Leo Paul Dana and Teresa E. Dana draw on their research among the Sámi people of Finland and Norway, to show how globalisation is threatening the traditional nature of Sámi self-employment. In the next paper, Curt H. Stiles, Carlos L. Rodriguez, Craig S. Galbraith examine the behaviour of buyers and sellers in two ethnic enclaves, Catholic Hispanics and Muslim Arabs, within a US metropolitan area, arguing that the advantage of intra-enclave buying and selling lies in a sense of ethnic identification that comes primarily from a religion common to each enclave. In a similar vein, Morton Weinfeld probes the ethnic Jewish sub-economy in Montreal and Toronto, concluding that the social and cultural capital available to Jews even as they move past the immigrant generation and into higher socio-economic strata provides ongoing benefits, both economic or social-psychological. The fourth paper, by Gözde Inal, explores why minority ethnic people start up small business in Britain, drawing on current literature to identify both 'pull' factors and 'push' factors that respectively encourage and force minority ethnic workers into self-employment, entrepreneurship and small businesses. Following that, Lakhwinder Singh and Varinder Jain offer insights into why unorganised industries in Punjab have flourished, despite predictions that the relatively small size and limited bargaining power of small-scale units threatened their survival in increasingly competitive global environment. Similarly, Graham Hall and Kalsom Abd. Wahab seek to determine what influences the survival and failure of small firms in Malaysia, concluding that product differentiation appears the most important factor in their survival. Carel Roessingh reports on still another sub-culture, Mennonite communities in Belize, focusing on their entrepreneurial activities and the way religious differentiation plays a role in their entrepreneurship. In the final paper, Cathy Parker, Rubén Yuste, J. Andrés Coca-Stefaniak and John Byrom report on their interviews with small urban independent retailers in Andalusia, concluding that while some sub-sectors, such as fashion outlets, showed optimism and signs associated with business success others, especially traditional food retailers, saw the small retail sector as a sector in crisis.

I believe this collection constitutes an interesting, timely and appropriate inaugural issue of the new *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*.